

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Virginia Panel Corporation

#### Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Virginia Panel Corporation Cuts Set-Up Times By 60 Percent

**Client Profile:**

Virginia Panel Corporation is a privately held company employing over 100 workers in Waynesboro, Virginia. Founded in 1959, the company originally manufactured patch boards for early computers that were "programmed" by making connections similar to an old-fashioned telephone switchboard. Today, Virginia Panel Corporation produces interface systems for test equipment, including machining, plating, wiring, and wire harness manufacture.

**Situation:**

Eighty percent of Virginia Panel Corporation (VPC)'s business is made-to-order. It is therefore vital that product changeover be accomplished in less than 20 minutes. Company management observed that set-up times on the FJV-20 and FJV-250 machines were taking too long, resulting in production delays and decreased labor productivity. The company asked Virginia's A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership (VPMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help address the problem.

**Solution:**

VPMEP hosted a set-up reduction workshop aimed at educating VPC employees on the fundamental principles of set-up reduction methodologies to reduce changeover time. The standard workshop emphasized the need to zero in on reducing the set-up time for the company's CNC machining center. By reducing set-up times in this area, VPC could increase capacity. VPMEP utilized an experienced set-up reduction team of project managers and key VPC personnel to provide on-site analysis, education, and implementation of proven methodology for successful implementation of initiatives. VPMEP encouraged VPC to incorporate a set-up "pit crew" into operations, thereby moving most of the internal set-up time to external time. The company also pre-staged tools and fixtures for quick access.

**Results:**

Reduced set-up time by 60 percent.  
Saving 38 hours (or \$200,000 in sales value) of machine time per week.  
Saving \$156,000 on the FJV-20 machine.  
Saving \$134,000 on the FJV-250 machine.

**Testimonial:**

[www.mep.nist.gov](http://www.mep.nist.gov)



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“Reductions in set-up times on capital-intensive automatic machining centers has allowed Virginia Panel Corporation to be much more responsive to changes in customer demand. Virginia’s A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership facilitated this associate involvement through their engaging and experienced trainers.”

Terry Shutter, Vice President of Engineering and Manufacturing